

## LAKE DISTRICTS

A lake district is a specialized unit of government designed to manage a lake or group of lakes. One of the major differences between a lake district and a lake association is a lake district's ability to tax property within the district. Since 1974, when Wisconsin passed legislation allowing the formation of lake districts, over 200 lake communities have formed lake districts. Lake districts have a unique blend of powers and governance provisions tailored to fit the needs of local lake communities. A lake district is guided and operated by those that live in or own property in the district. A lake district's day-to-day operations are carried out by a board of commissioners composed of elected volunteers and local officials. The financial direction of the district is determined by district residents (electors) and property owners at an annual meeting.

Unlike other governmental units, such as towns or sanitary districts, nonresident property owners have the right to vote and hold office in lake districts. Lake districts in Wisconsin have tremendous opportunities to address lake and watershed management issues.

The laws governing lake districts can be found in chapter 33 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. Those legal questions that lake districts may have which are not addressed in Chapter 33 are often covered under the same body of municipal laws that govern Wisconsin towns and counties. For more information on Chapter 33 go to: <https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/organizations/guide.aspx>

Oneida County has seven (7) current active Lake Districts: Bear, Crescent, Horsehead, Mid, Nokomis, Squash and Thunder. Most Lake Districts have five commissioners. Three members are elected from the residents or property owners within the district. The other two commissioners are appointed by the local units of government. One of the appointed members is selected by the Conservation and UW-Extension Education Committee.

For additional information regarding Lake Districts go to: <https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/organizations/guide.aspx>